

Understanding the Needs of the Youths and their Coping Strategies

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Abstract

Youths are the most energetic and productive segment of the total population of any country. Generally, transitional period from childhood to adulthood is considered as youth. But the age limit of youth varies from country to country. People in Bangladesh within the age group of 18-35 years are considered as youth as per its National Youth Policy. Among the total population of Bangladesh about one-thirds are of youth group. As individuals move into youth from adolescence their needs and demands are changed. But what is the nature of needs of the youths of Bangladesh? Do they face any barrier to meet their needs? What kind of strategies do they follow to meet their needs? These questions should be addressed with empirical evidence for the betterment of the youths. Therefore, an exploratory study has been carried out by following qualitative approach to address the above-mentioned research questions and the findings have been presented in this paper with policy implications and concluding remarks at the end. The findings show that quality education, pure and fresh food, healthcare and reproductive health services, employment opportunity, housing with utility services, training for skill development and recreational facilities are their prime needs. They could fulfill their needs to some extent but still there are a lot of barriers to fulfill their needs. Accordingly, they adopt a variety of indigenous mechanisms to cope with this situation. However, the findings would be useful for the policy makers, social workers and development practitioners, and create a new avenue for further study in this field.

Keywords: Youths, Needs, Barriers, Coping strategies.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the over populated countries in the world where more than 71 million people live in a landmass of 1,47,570 square kilometers. The density of population is 1171 persons per square kilometer and the growth rate is 1.3% per annum. Literacy rate is only 77.9 % (07 years and over). But net enrolment in primary education is almost 100% and the retention rate is 80%. The life expectancy at birth is 72.3 years (70.8 years for male and 73.8 years for female, Ministry of Finance, 2024). Only 31.51% people live in urban areas and rest of them (68.49%) live in rural parts. Out of total

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population 18.7% live under poverty line (urban poverty is 14.7% and rural poverty is 20.7%) and the per capita income is 27.84 US\$ (Ministry of Finance, 2024; BBS, 2023).

Population of Bangladesh is equivalent to 2.18% of the total population of the world. Among the total population in Bangladesh one-thirds are youths. A person, in general, is considered as youth who has attained puberty. It is concerned with timeframe and physical as well as psychological development. It is such a time of total life span that is neither childhood nor adulthood, rather somewhere in-between (Webster's Dictionary, 2004). The United Nations defined a person as youth who belongs to the age limit of 15-24 years (United Nations, 1981). But the government of Bangladesh has an official definition of youth. It defined the population as youth in the age group of 18-35 years in its National Youth Policy (DYD, 2007).

Youths are very potential for any country as they are very energetic, creative and a productive segment of population. They are also the most strong, self-confident and productive guiding force. Hence, advancement of a nation mostly depends upon the development and contribution of its youth force (DYD, 2007). But their needs have to be fulfilled for their proper development; then they could be able to contribute to the development of the country. Therefore, they should be provided with required services to meet their basic needs such as nutritious food, quality education, healthcare and reproductive healthcare, adequate shelter with necessary facilities, recreation and training for skill development.

It is found that the government of Bangladesh has already undertaken some affirmative measures to fulfill their above-mentioned requirements. The government has adopted education policy, taken confirmatory measures to increase enrolment into educational institutions and reduce dropouts. The government has also established technical education board and training center, providing training through the Department of Youth Development and private organizations for their skill development (Ali et al., 2006; DYD, 2009; Hossain, 2010; Roy & Bhattacharjee, 2013). These programs are mostly top-down initiatives. Opinions of the youths are not sought in most of the cases. Usually their opinions are unheard and their problems and needs are ignored (Lo & Au, 2004). Therefore, it is most necessary to understand the needs of the youth, to what extent their needs are fulfilled, what are the constraining factors to fulfill their needs, and how do they cope with this situation? The indentified issues should be investigated scientifically in order to address youths' problems and to prepare effective plans and programs. Therefore, an exploratory study entitled Understanding the Needs of the

Youths and Their Coping Strategy has been carried out to fill up the identified research gaps and the findings of the study have been presented in this paper.

2. Methodology

The general objective of the present study was to understand the needs of the young people in Bangladesh and to analyze their coping strategies. The present study used qualitative approach to attain the general objective of the study as it is involved with the process of analyzing social phenomena rather than outcome and examining cause-effect relationship of dependent and independent variables. A qualitative approach is also taken to understand how people make sense of their life experiences (Atieno, 2009). It provides deeper understanding of social phenomena that is less likely in quantitative approach. Quantitative approach is concerned with examining correlation between dependent and independent variables that could not go to the inner aspects of social phenomenon (Silverman, 2001). Considering the advantages of qualitative approach and disadvantages of quantitative approach to analyze the social phenomena, this study employed the qualitative approach for analyzing the identified research issues. However, the study followed purposive sampling procedure as it gives the researcher ample opportunity to select appropriate sample. The researcher purposively selected ten youths (five males and five females) from Charkadah village of Gurudaspur upazila under Natore district and ten (five males and five females) from Sutrapur area of Dhaka South City Corporation considering the merits of purposive sampling procedure, that is, availability of youths and easy access to them. In addition, the selected areas were found to bear the general characteristics of both rural (Charkadah village) and urban (Sutrapur) areas. The reason for selecting samples from both rural and urban areas was so as to understand the nature of their problems and coping strategies from diverse socioeconomic and geographical point of view, as human behavior is not context free rather significantly influenced by the settings in which it occurs (Atieno, 2009; Scot, 2001).

The study used face to face interview with semi-structured interview schedule as principal method of data collection where open-ended questions were included. Data were also collected through focus group discussion (FGD) with the youths and non-participant observation to supplement interview data. Non-participant observation method was followed to understand the dynamics of responses such as non-verbal behavior, body language etc. that would not have been possible to map only through interviewing. Data were also collected from key informants (parents, teachers of school, college and university and government officials) to

understand the nature of problems of youths and their coping strategies. In addition, relevant literatures such as books, journal articles, and published and unpublished research reports were reviewed as secondary sources of information.

It should be noted that the ethical issues are important in carrying out social research. Inspired by Miles and Humberman (1994) the researcher followed some ethical guidelines in collecting data. For example, guaranty of confidentiality was given to the respondents, verbal consent was taken from the respondents prior to interview and such questions were not asked that might be sensitive and harmful to the respondents. However, narrative analysis method has been used for analyzing data as a systematic work and some verbatim quotations have been presented for better understanding the research issue.

3. Results

3.1 Socioeconomic and demographic conditions of the respondents

The respondents were from different socioeconomic groups. In respect of age limit, they were from the age group of 18-35 years. None of them were illiterate, rather some of them were highly educated (obtained Masters Degree). Majority of the respondents were students of different levels (Secondary, Higher secondary and Tertiary levels). Some of them were involved in agricultural work and a few of them were employed in formal and informal sectors. Most of the students had no personal income while some of them were found to earn some money through doing private tuition. But income level was not satisfactory for those who were employed in lower position. Household income of the respondents ranged from BDT 5,000/- to BDT 25,000/- in rural area, while in urban area it ranged from BDT 10000/- to BDT 70,000/-. On the other hand, household size ranged from 4-6 that was higher than that of national level (4.53) and majority of them used to live on the edge of subsistence and were considered as poor since their per capita income was less than US\$ 2 per day.

3.2 Understanding the needs of the youths

In general, need refers to the things that somebody requires in order to live in a comfortable way or to achieve what they want (Hornby, 2000, p. 851). The respondents also defined need almost in the same way. They opined that the essential goods and services that are fundamental to survive for human beings are considered as needs. They also explained that the circumstances in which something is necessary and motivate someone to achieve those things are also considered as need. They identified some needs that are badly needed for them to lead livelihood. For example, food and nutrition, quality education, healthcare, reproductive healthcare, shelter, recreation,

employment (satisfying job), as well as vocational and technical education were identified by them as their urgent needs. In addition, population control, creating social awareness, especially among the women, training on small and cottage industry, and attaining self-independence were identified as needs by the selected samples. The findings show that the opinions differ on the basis of the location, economic condition and occupation of the respondents. For example, respondents from poor group emphasized food and nutrition and healthcare, students who live in mess houses or student hostels mentioned the need for increasing residential facilities as their current needs. On the other hand, the respondents employed in lower positions called for self-independence and empowerment, while the youths who were about to complete their formal education identified the employment opportunity as their crying needs. The participants of FGDs also cited the same things as their needs.

3.3 Extent of and barriers to fulfillment of needs of the youths

Bangladesh has made outstanding progress in achieving MDGs, especially in reducing headcount poverty and prevalence of underweight children, attaining gender parity in primary and secondary education as well as in lowering infant and maternal mortality rate. While other areas in need of greater attention are hunger and poverty reduction, employment generation, increase in completion of primary education and adult literacy rate, ensuring quality education at all levels, creation of job opportunity and increase the presence of skilled health workers and trained birth attendance (Planning Commission, 2015, p. 9). It is no different in the case of the respondents of the present study. The findings show that the respondents could fulfill these needs to some extent but there are a lot of barriers to realize their required needs that are discussed below:

3.3.1 Barriers to attain education

It is evident that Bangladesh has made significant progress to achieve MDG-2. Net enrollment rate (97.7%) and gender parity have been achieved at the primary level (Planning Commission, 2015). But gender gap still exists at higher secondary and tertiary levels. The respondents were asked about fulfillment of their expectation of education. In response to this question, some of them expressed their negative reaction about fulfillment of their expectations. The findings show that some youths were compelled to stop further study due to financial constraint. On the other hand, female students were compelled to give up schooling due to early marriage and eve-teasing. One of the respondents reported:

“I could not continue my study due to teasing and early marriage. Some unruly youths used to tease me on the way to

school and to return home. As a result, my parents have stopped *my schooling and giving me marriage,*” (Mousumi).

However, guardians of urban area are worried about quality education of their children. The respondents underscored that it was very difficult to get admission of children in to a good school. One of the respondents reported this issue in the following way:

“I am worried about admission of my son and daughter as there is lack of schools that provide quality education. Actually, the number of candidates is very high compared to the number of seats in school or college. It creates tension among the guardians,” (Amin).

Low income is another constraining factor to have quality education. One of the respondents, Kawsar, mentioned:

“I could not admit my baby in to a good school due to financial crisis as my monthly income is very poor. I am not in a position to pay tuition and session fee. It is beyond my capacity. So, my child has been admitted in to a lower quality of school.”

Furthermore, the respondents studying at tertiary level reported that lack of educational materials and opportunities (library equipped with appropriate books and journal, computer lab, internet facilities) are constraining factors to get quality education. On the other hand, sometimes the guardians create pressure on female students for marriage before completion of their study. It is one kind of barrier to higher education for female students. In addition, distance of academic institution and lack of transportation facilities are among other barriers to attaining education.

3.3.2 Barriers to fulfillment of food requirement

Growth and development of human beings mostly depend upon proper consumption of food and nutrition. But many people of Bangladesh are still deprived of nutritious food and improved diet because of economic hardship and price hike although rate of poverty has dropped from 56.7% in 1991-92 to 18.7% in 2022 (BBS, 2023). In addition, due to natural disaster they face food crisis and they are to reduce food intake and change food habit (Hossain, 2014). Almost all the respondents, except a few, reported that they are not in food crisis. But problem is that they do not get fresh and pure food because of using excessive chemicals in food items and adulteration of food by dishonest businessmen. Contaminated food is one kind of barrier to the fulfillment of food requirement. However, existing gender norms is another

barrier to fulfillment of food requirement for female youths that reflects the following statement:

“As I am a girl, my mother did not use to take care of me. My mother preferred my brother to me in distributing food,” (Rahima).

3.3.3 Barriers to fulfillment of healthcare

Literature shows that Bangladesh has made considerable progress in child survival rate and reducing maternal mortality rate. But inequality in terms of access to and utilization of health services among the population still require to be addressed (Planning Commission, 2015). However, the government of Bangladesh has upgraded hospitals at district and upazila (sub-district) levels and established community clinic at union levels. But some people could not avail health services provided by these organizations due to financial hardship, lack of cordiality of doctors and other service staff, and high rate of private service. On the other hand, number of physicians is still poor compared to service recipients (1:2129), lack of machines and tools at hospitals and lack of qualified and efficient physicians are barriers to get health services. The participants of FGDs also cited the same barriers to the fulfillment of healthcare needs. Moreover, ignorance and negligence of the people to receive health service are also existed in Bangladesh. Sometimes people do not care about the illness and do not think about receiving treatment. On the other hand, the qualified and efficient doctors are reluctant to stay in rural areas. Therefore, rural people are deprived of health services that are reflected in the following statements:

“Important machinery and medicines are not available at upazila health complex and community clinic. So, we do not get required services in need. Besides, qualified doctors are reluctant to stay in rural areas,” (Joly).

“Hospitals and community clinics located in rural areas have lack of qualified doctors. Sometimes they could not diagnose the disease properly. Therefore, the people do not get proper treatment,” (Mousumi).

“There is a lack of qualified doctors in hospitals. Sometimes they ignore the patients. On the other hand, health services at private hospitals and clinics in urban areas are very expensive. The poor people could not afford them,” (Risan).

Mahbuba expressed her opinion in the same way: She explained:

“Healthcare services are very expensive at private hospitals that are beyond the capacity of the young people like me. On the

other hand, quality of healthcare services at the government hospitals is very poor and it is very time consuming.”

3.3.4 Barriers to fulfillment of reproductive healthcare

Reproductive health is a major aspect of global health issue. It is a fundamental and inalienable part of women’s health. It incorporates maternal and child health program, family planning, infertility, sexually transmitted disease, pre-natal and post-natal services, safe pregnancy, safe delivery, and post-natal infections (Tarafder, 2013). But the respondents have little knowledge regarding reproductive health. Unlike the general health problems, the youth would not like to express their problems related to reproductive health. Even they were reluctant to talk about this issue. They showed their shyness during interview. In spite of their reluctance some of the respondents, especially female respondents studying at tertiary level provided valuable information. The respondents claimed that parents are not aware about this issue. Again the masses and youths do not have adequate information in this regard. Furthermore, distance of healthcare centers, lack of transportation facilities, high cost of services, lack of technical qualifications of the practitioners are major barriers to fulfillment of reproductive health services that comply with the findings of Tarafder (2013). Rahima reported that:

“There is lack of efficient health workers in our country. On the other hand, it is expensive and health center is located far from the residence. It very often discourages the pregnant women from going to health center for check-up.”

Another respondent, Mahmbuba, asserted that:

“Young women living in a rural area feel shy to show their body during pregnancy. Purdah norms restrict their movement and refrain them from having health care services. Sometimes they abstain from disclosing their problems related to sexual disease due to shame.”

The above-mentioned findings conform to the finding of Tarafder (2013) who found that rural women in Bangladesh feel shy to show their pregnant body. They are less likely to seek care from a doctor or practitioner compared to an urban area.

3.3.5 Barriers to fulfillment of housing facilities

Likewise, food and clothing shelter is one of the basic needs for survival of the human beings. Shelter or housing is not merely a roof over head. It is such a facility that protects its residents from natural calamities. It should

have some utility services that are indispensable for the survival of the civilized man such as safe drinking water, sanitation, electricity and other essential services. It is essential for security, growth, development and dignity of human beings (Nawaz, 2004). The respondents also identified housing as one of their needs. They all enjoy housing facility to some extent although there are some limitations to fulfill required housing facilities. The respondents from rural area, whose household income is poor, reported that their houses are kutcha, built on small piece of land, vulnerable to natural disasters (floods, storm etc.) and not equipped with modern facilities (furniture, safe sanitation). In contrast, the respondents with high household income living in urban areas enjoy housing facility with essential utility services. But power disruption and discontinuity of gas supply in some areas hamper the livelihood of the youths. But the respondents from poor group, living in slums and dilapidated houses built on khas land, are deprived of utility services. One of the respondents reported that:

"I live in an abandoned building of my appointing authority. Its condition is very deplorable. There is no electricity and gas supply in our building. We also suffer from lack of water supply. It is very difficult to live here," (Helal).

However, the young students and unmarried persons face different types of problems in enjoying housing facility. There is a scarcity of seats in college hostels and residential halls of the university. On the other hand, the owners of houses are less likely to rent their houses to young unmarried persons and students. In addition, high house rent, unhealthy environment and lack of security are among other problems faced by youths in urban areas.

3.3.6 Barriers to employment sector

One of the urgent needs of the young people is to get a decent job to lead a livelihood. But unemployment rate among the youths in Bangladesh is higher than that of the overall unemployment rate. Unemployment rate of youth was recorded 10.3% in 2013 (Goldin et al. 2015 cited in Guha & Mamun, 2016) while the World Bank considered 41% Bangladeshi youths as NEET (not in employment, education and training). On the other hand, 75% business leaders claimed that a scarcity of skilled youth was a major challenge to hire workers in industrial and business sectors (cited in Sohel & Khan, 2015). But what is the perception of the youths in this regard? The respondents were asked about what are the causes of unemployment or the barriers to get a decent job. The study finds a variety of reasons for unemployment. Population explosion is a vital cause of unemployment as the number of job is quite poor compared to number of job seekers (candidates). Besides, it is very difficult to be an entrepreneur because of administrative complexity. It is difficult to get a loan and approval of various

authorities. On the other hand, a few of the respondents mentioned purdah norms as a barrier to get a job. Practice of purdah restricts movement of young ladies. Rahima, one of the female respondents reported that:

“It is difficult for me to get a job as I maintain purdah. It restricts my movement in public places. I think it is one kind of barrier to get a job.”

However, some respondents think that present education system is not suitable to get a job as it does not enhance adequate skills and knowledge. On the other hand, because of financial crisis some of the respondents are deprived of attaining quality education that is reflected in the following statement:

“It is very difficult to get a job due to lack of quality education. Traditional education system is not enough to enhance skills and expertise. Additional training is badly needed to achieve skills in different trades. But I could not receive training due to financial crisis. Finally, money is a deciding factor in attaining quality education and getting a good job,” (Helal).

The above-mentioned statements indicate that economic hardship is a barrier to receiving quality education and ultimately to getting a satisfying job. Even the youth could not run small enterprise for self-employment because of financial crisis.

3.3.7 Barriers to vocational education and training sector

The respondents identified vocational education and training as one of their needs. The government of Bangladesh has established a good number of vocational education and training institutes along with private initiatives in order to fulfill this need. But it could not fulfill the needs of the youth and provide skilled manpower to job market. Lack of efficient and skilled instructor is one of the causes to get quality training as opined by the respondents that conforms to the findings of a study carried out by Newaz et al., (2013). On the other hand, many youths could not receive training due to financial crisis. But the female respondents face problems in receiving training that are different in nature from male. One of the respondents reported that:

“I have a bitter experience of computer training center. I got admitted to a computer training program. But I was a victim of teasing of the instructor. Therefore, I had to leave the training center” (Rahima).

The above-mentioned statement is the reflection of Bangladesh society that indicates eve-teasing is still a barrier to female education and visibility in public places.

3.4 Understanding the coping strategy of the youths

In general, coping strategy is conscious efforts to solve problem that help in overcoming or minimizing stress. It includes the combination of activities and choices that an individual, group or any household opt for in order to survive (Blaikie et al., (1994) cited in Palmino-Raganit, 2005). The respondents adopt a variety of strategies to fulfill their needs in spite of various types of barriers and limitations. The strategies are as follows:

3.4.1 Strategies to overcome barriers to attain education

It has been found that financial crisis is one of the limitations to achieve quality education in Bangladesh. The findings show that some respondents (students) earn money by doing private tuition to overcome financial crisis. On the other hand, some of them put additional effort to overcome their weakness in some subjects especially in English. The parents also put extra effort to overcome the weakness of their children. A few of the respondents obtained higher degree as irregular examinee along with doing job as they had to stop their schooling due to financial crisis. One of the respondents stated that:

“I had to stop my study due to financial crisis. Now I am doing a job along with studying as an irregular student under Open University,” (Helal).

3.4.2 Strategies to fulfill requirements of food

The respondents consume cheap but fresh and nutritious food to fulfill their food requirements. They try to avoid contaminated food and keep the food item under water for a long time to reduce contamination, especially for reducing contamination of formalin. In rural areas, the respondents produce various types of vegetable for household consumption, rear poultry and catch fish from open water to fulfill their food requirements. Despite these initiatives they compel to consume adulterated/poisoned food. Hriday, one of the respondents from a rural area, reported that:

“Usually we produce various types of vegetables surrounding our house for household consumption. We eat fish catching from the water body and canal. Sometimes we are compelled to buy vegetables, fish and fruits that are contaminated with chemicals.”

3.4.3 Strategies to fulfill requirements of healthcare

In respect of coping with limitation of healthcare the respondents mostly buy medicine from pharmacy in place of going to specialist physician for expert opinion. Sometimes it creates further health hazards. But the respondents very often pay no attention due to their ignorance. However, they also receive services from the government hospital and clinic with patience though it is time consuming and cannot meet their demands adequately. One of the female respondents reported that:

“Sometimes I go to the government hospitals for receiving health services. It takes more time than private chamber of practitioners. But I get it at the minimal cost, that is, only by service fee,” (Rahima).

However, some of them try to receive improved health services from private hospital and private chamber of the physicians in the case of critical situations. It creates financial burden on them. The respondents also prefer preventive measures to curative ones so that they could lead a healthy life. For example, they maintain neat and cleanliness and follow health rules to be safe from infectious and transmittable diseases. Almost the same responses were found in FGD sessions.

3.4.4 Strategies to fulfill requirements of reproductive healthcare

It has been found that the respondents have very little ideas about reproductive health. Therefore, they try to understand reproductive health issue by consulting literature and through mass media (by listening to FM band radio in cell phone and by watching television) so that difficulties related to reproductive health may be avoided. Mahbuba, a student of Master’s degree, mentioned that:

“I have gained knowledge related to reproductive health. But it is very little compared to requirements. We should try to know more to be protected from reproductive health hazards.”

In case of child birth, most deliveries are taken place at own residence in rural areas by the assistance of traditional birth attendants who have minimum orientation to midwifery. But in urban areas the respondents prefer hospital and maternity center for delivery. Mousumi, one of the respondents from a rural area, reported that:

“Most of the childbirths in our village take place at house with the assistance of traditional birth attendants. Only in critical cases the people take the help of a professional midwife or go to hospitals.”

The findings, mentioned above, are the general situation of Bangladesh in respect of reproductive healthcare that comply with the findings of Tarafder (2013).

3.4.5 Strategies to cope with lack of housing facilities

The findings show that all the respondents enjoy housing facilities with some limitations. They adopt various measures to minimize the limitations. They try to keep their houses neat and clean to avoid unhealthy environment. They cook for two times when gas supply is available to overcome gas crisis. Sometimes they use kerosene stove during disruption of gas supply. However, some of the respondents (students) share their rooms with their partners to reduce housing cost as they are not in a position to bear too much housing cost alone. The statement of Risan is mentionable in this respect. He stated:

“I live in a rented mess house. I share my room with my roommate to reduce expenditure. Lack of gas supply is one of the problems in our area. So, we use kerosene stove to cook during disruption of gas supply.”

However, it has been found that the youths have limited access to recreational facilities as the play grounds are limited and parks are occupied by unauthorized vendors and floating people. As a result they pass their leisure time by gossiping with their friends and listening to songs in a cell phone.

3.4.6 Strategies to overcome limitations of vocational education and training sector

The findings show that there are some barriers to attain vocational education and to receive training such as financial crisis, lack of skilled instructors, eve-teasing and lack of training centers in rural areas. Because of financial crisis some of the respondents were compelled to learn how to operate a computer and a photocopier machine with the assistance of friends and relatives. One of the respondents reported that:

“I have learned how to operate a digital photocopier machine from my maternal uncle. Now I can make copies and take prints by using a photocopier machine. It (my efficiency) has helped me to get a job in a photocopier shop,” (Sumon).

In rural areas, some youths also learned poultry and livestock rearing by observing activities of other persons on a trial and error basis. Likewise, female youths learned embroidery and poultry rearing from their ancestors, friends and neighbors. On the other hand, a few of the respondents reported that they learned how to operate a computer on a trial and error basis as the

competency and quality of the instructors of vocational education institutes are not up to the desired level.

4. Discussion

The present study is inclined to understand the needs of the youths, barriers to fulfill their needs and to analyze the strategies adopted by them to cope with the situation. The study unveils some needs of the youths that should be fulfilled for their better development. It finds that the crying needs of the youths are quality education, healthcare, reproductive healthcare, satisfying job, vocational and technical education and training on small and cottage industry so that they could attain self-reliance while previous studies focused on employment, education, healthcare and so on (Biswas, 2017; Guha, 2016; British Council, Action Aid & University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, 2015). But the nature of needs varies from person to person and place to place that conforms to the findings of Graner et al., (2012). For example, respondents from lower income group emphasized on food and nutrition and healthcare. Students who live in mess houses or student hostels mentioned the need for increasing residential facilities as their current needs.

The youths under the present study were found to face a lot of challenges to fulfill their needs. The study finds that in spite of increasing enrolment at primary level many of the youths could not continue their study due to financial constraints. On the other hand, female youths were compelled to give up their study because of early marriage and eve-teasing that comply with the findings of Islam (2012). Furthermore, insufficient educational materials and opportunities are constraining factors to get quality education that conform to Sarkar et al., (2013) study. However, data show that in spite of economic hardship most of the respondents could arrange for their necessary food in general. But the problem is that they do not get fresh and pure food because of use of excessive chemicals in food items and adulteration of food by dishonest businessmen. Contaminated food is one kind of barrier to fulfillment of food requirements (Hossain, 2014).

With regard to healthcare, rural youths are deprived of healthcare facilities as the qualified and efficient physicians are reluctant to stay in rural areas. On other hand, healthcare facilities at the government hospitals are not up to the desired level and expenses of healthcare at private hospitals are very high that are beyond the capacity of most of the youths. Therefore, the youths, especially the rural poor, suffer from lack of health services. Like, the healthcare facilities, the youths are deprived of reproductive health services. The findings show that high cost of services, lack of technical qualifications of the practitioners and lack of transportation facilities are major constraints

to avail reproductive health services that comply with the findings of Banik (2016).

In respect of housing facilities, the findings show that the poor households of slum area are deprived of utility services (Shams et al., 2014). But all the respondents of urban areas mentioned that disruption of power (although the condition has been better than earlier) and gas supply hampers their livelihoods. On the other hand, houses in rural areas are mostly dilapidated and vulnerable to natural disasters. However, unemployment is one of the problems faced by the youths. The study finds that to get a decent job is challenging for the youths. Absence of quality education is one of the barriers to get a job (The Independent, 2018). On the other hand, some of the youths could not attain quality education due to financial crisis. In addition, population growth and complexity of getting financial support for self-employment are responsible for unemployment. Purdah norm is also responsible for women unemployment in Bangladesh that *restricts women's mobility*.

The youths under the present study adopt a variety of strategies to fulfill their needs. For the purpose of combating financial crisis the youths earn money through doing private tuition, and part-time job along with their schooling. With regard to fulfillment of health services, the youths mostly depend upon the government hospitals for healthcare but it is time consuming as the number of service recipients is greater than that of service providers. Sometimes they are compelled to receive services at private hospitals that further creates financial burden on them. Very often it creates pauperization among the people. The findings show that the youths are compelled to live in unhealthy environment because of financial crisis and lack of housing facilities. But they try to maintain neat and cleanliness. The poor youths share their rooms with their partners to ease financial crisis. However, they depend upon modern technology (cell phone, computer, and television) for fulfillment of their recreational needs as play grounds are occupied by vested interest groups, vendors and floating people. And it is not favorable for their proper development.

5. Policy implications

The findings of the study lead the researcher to the following policy recommendations. These recommendations are designed to strengthen youth development programs to address needs of the youths of the changing society of Bangladesh.

The study finds that early marriage is still a constraining factor for higher education of female students. Therefore, awareness should be raised against early marriage and about importance of higher education for women. It is also found that because of economic hardship many youths are compelled to discontinue their schooling. The government may arrange for interest free education loan for poor household so that their children can continue their study. The findings further show that lack of standard books, technological facilities, and skilled instructors are still constraining factors for receiving quality education in our country. Therefore, appropriate measures should be taken to overcome these limitations. There should be arrangement for available books, modern technology and equipment, and appointment of skilled and qualified instructors.

The findings show that contamination of food is a serious barrier to the fulfillment of food requirements. The government has to strictly apply related law to protect food adulteration so that the people can consume fresh and pure food. It would be helpful to the development of public health situation. However, the data indicate that the youths are being deprived of health services due to financial crisis, negligence of health practitioners and lack of necessary medicine and machineries. Therefore, availability of medicine and necessary medical instruments as well as physicians and nurses should be ensured in hospitals, medical centers and community clinics so that the youths can get best services. The findings further show that the youths have little knowledge about reproductive health. Hence, awareness has to be created among the youths about reproductive health through mass media and traditional cultural programs. Reproductive health and sexual education should be included at least in the curriculum of tertiary levels so as to strengthen the knowledge base of the youths regarding this issue.

It has been found in this study that many youths, especially in urban areas live in dilapidated houses and in unhealthy condition, and some of them (especially students) face problem in hiring houses as they are unmarried. Therefore, housing facilities should be increased for low income-group with utility services. On the other hand, residential facilities should be increased for the students of tertiary level.

In addition, the government has to facilitate employment opportunity for the youths as a large number of them is still unemployed. Connection between educational institutes and job market has to be strengthened so that the youths can enter into the job market after completion of their education.

6. Conclusion

The main objective of the present study was to explore the understanding of the youths about their needs, limitations to fulfill the needs and to understand how they cope with the situation. The respondents identified a variety of needs, barriers to fulfill their needs adequately and delineated a number of coping mechanisms. The findings of the study are intended to be useful to the government and youth welfare organizations in developing new plans and programs for youth development. But generalization of the findings should be made with caution since the study has been carried out on a small number of samples selected purposively by using qualitative approach. It did not examine cause-effect relationship between education and employment, education and income, unemployment and its consequences and so on. Therefore, further research may be carried out on the identified issues. But this study is a little contribution to the growing body of literature and knowledge on youth problems and their development.

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